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Optionality in linguistics

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Abstract

© 2014, Canadian Center of Science and Education. All rights reserved. This paper presents an attempt at conducting an analysis of the notion “optionality” based on the works of experts in the given sphere. There is a certain lack of consistency in the matter of understanding and interpretation of the given phenomenon in the linguistic literature. Some scientists mean by optionality an opportunity to substitute one synonymic word by the other without significant changes in the plane of content; others recognize ellipsis in it, while the third party-an optional combinability. The issue of faculty has obtained the widest discussion in sinology. According to one of the theories, optionality can be studied against redundancy and economy of language means. In this case the phenomenon of optionality in the Chinese language can manifest itself on the level of phonemes, morphemes and lexemes. Functioning of grammatical markers expressing aspect, tense, number, etc. can serve as an example, as it possesses the property of optionality. The majority of scholars agree that optionality is an objective property of language system and is closely connected with the process of the language ongoing development.

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Keywords

Grammatical redundancy, Obligatoriness, Optional morphological markers, Optionality, Quasioptionality